

REMARKS

Pursuant to the present amendment, independent claims 11, 20, 27 and 30 have been amended, and claims 1-10 and 35-56 have been canceled. Thus, claims 11-34 are currently pending in the present application. No new matter has been introduced by way of the present amendment. Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested

In the Office Action, claims 1-34 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as allegedly being anticipated by Muraka (U.S. Patent No. 5,637,185). Claims 53-56 were objected to but indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

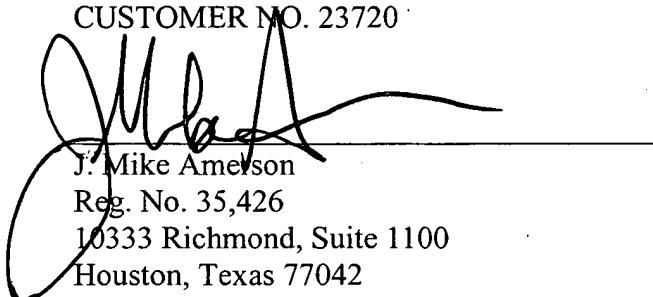
Pursuant to the present response, independent claims 11, 20, 27 and 30 have been amended to include the limitations from now-canceled dependent claims 53, 54, 55 and 56, respectively, all of which were indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that claims 11, 20, 27 and 30, and all claims depending therefrom, are in condition for immediate allowance. It should be understood that in making the amendments set forth herein, Applicants do not acquiesce in the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejections. Applicants specifically reserve the right to pursue claims of the scope set forth in the rejected claims in a later filed application should they desire to do so. Moreover, since the amendments set forth herein merely re-present allowable dependent claims in independent form, it is believed that there are no issues of prosecution history estoppel with respect to these claims.

For the aforementioned reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all pending claims are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at (713) 934-4055 with any questions, comments or suggestions relating to the referenced patent application.

Respectfully submitted,

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